

Amendments to the Claims

1-35. (Cancel)

36. (New) A method for precluding elution of lead and nickel from a plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling, comprising washing at least a liquid-contacting part of the plumbing device of a copper alloy containing both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, with a cleaning fluid incorporating therein nitric acid and hydrochloric acid as an inhibitor under conditions of a temperature and a duration permitting effective removal of both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, thereby effectively depriving a surface of the liquid-contacting part of both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, and causing the hydrochloric acid to form a coating film on the surface of the liquid-contacting part and preclude elution of both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, from the surface of the liquid-contacting part in the presence of the coating film.

37. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein the hydrochloric acid as an inhibitor in the cleaning fluid is caused to form a film of Cl^- ions on the surface of the liquid-contacting part.

38. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein the nitric acid has a concentration c in a range of $0.5 \text{ wt\%} < c < 7 \text{ wt\%}$ and the hydrochloric acid has a concentration d in a range of $0.05 \text{ wt\%} < d < 0.7 \text{ wt\%}$ in the cleaning fluid.

39. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein the temperature is set to $10^\circ\text{C} \leq x \leq 50^\circ\text{C}$ and the duration is set to $5 \text{ minutes} \leq y \leq 30 \text{ minutes}$, wherein $y = 250/x$ is satisfied, to attain removal of both lead and nickel effectively from the surface the liquid-contacting part.

40. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein the duration is set to 20 seconds $\leq y \leq 30$ minutes and the temperature is set to $10^{\circ}\text{C} \leq x \leq 50^{\circ}\text{C}$ to attain removal of nickel effectively from the surface of the liquid-contacting part.

41. (New) A method for precluding elution of lead from a plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling, comprising at least a degreasing step, a cold water-washing step subsequent to the degreasing step, a plating step, an acid-pickling step and a cold water-washing step subsequent to the acid-pickling step.

42. (New) A method according to claim 41, which further comprises a deleading step prior to the plating step.

43. (New) A method according to claim 41, wherein the deleading step uses a cleaning fluid identical in composition and concentration with a the cleaning fluid for the acid-pickling step.

44. (New) A method according to claim 42, wherein the cleaning fluid used in the deleading step is reused as the cleaning fluid in the acid-pickling step.

45. (New) A method according to claim 41, wherein at least alkaline waste liquid discharged from the degreasing step and acidic waste liquid discharged from the acid-pickling step are mixed and neutralized, and dilute alkaline waste liquid discharged from the cold water-washing step subsequent to the degreasing step and dilute acidic waste liquid discharged from the cold water-washing step subsequent to the acid picking step are mixed and neutralized.

46. (New) A method according to claim 41, further comprising a hot water-washing step performed prior to the degreasing step to effect removal of a deposited substance.

47. (New) A method according to claim 41, further comprising a neutralizing step performed subsequent to the cold water-washing step after the degreasing step to effect perfect neutralization and removal of an alkali component.

48. (New) A method according to claim 41, further comprising a rust-preventing step subsequent to the cold water-washing step after the acid-pickling step.

49. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein component parts resulting from forging or from forging and subsequent machining are individually subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or to a nickel-removing treatment alone and the treated component parts are assembled into a finished product.

50. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein a finished product formed of a plurality of parts resulting from forging or from forging and subsequent machining is subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment alone.

51. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein the copper alloy that is subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment alone is brass or bronze.

52. (New) A method according to claim 36, wherein the plumbing device is a device that has a surface thereof subjected to a plating treatment using a nickel-containing metal.

53. (New) A plumbing device made of a copper alloy containing both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, that includes a valve and a tube coupling, having at least a liquid-contacting part washed with a cleaning fluid incorporating therein nitric acid and hydrochloric acid as an inhibitor under conditions of a temperature and a duration permitting effective removal of both lead and nickel, or nickel alone, thereby performing

deleading treatment and nickel-removing treatment or nickel-removing treatment alone and causing the hydrochloric acid to form a coating film on a surface of the liquid-contacting part to thereby effectively precluding elution of both lead and nickel or elution of nickel alone from the surface of the liquid-contacting part in the presence of the coating layer.

54. (New) A plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling, successively treated in at least a degreasing step, a cold water-washing step subsequent to the degreasing step, a plating step, an acid-pickling step and a cold water-washing step subsequent to the acid-pickling step.

55. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 54, further treated in a deleading step prior to the plating step.

56. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 54, further treated in a hot water-washing step prior to the degreasing step to effect removal of a deposited substance.

57. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 54, further treated in a neutralizing step subsequent to said cold water-washing step following said degreasing step to perfectly neutralize and remove an alkali component.

58. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 54, further treated in a rust-preventing step subsequent to the cold water-washing step after the acid-pickling step.

59. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 53, comprising component parts forged, or forged and subsequently machined, individually subjected to both a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment, wherein the treated component parts are assembled into a finished product.

60. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 53, comprising a plurality of parts cast, or cast and subsequently machined, and subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment.

61. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 53, wherein the copper alloy treated by both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment is brass or bronze.

62. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 61, wherein the brass is a material proofed against elution of zinc.

63. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 53, wherein the plumbing device has a surface thereof plated with a nickel-containing alloy.

64. (New) In a method for precluding elution of lead and nickel from a plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling set forth in claim 36, the cleaning fluid for removing both lead and nickel or nickel alone comprising a mixed acid incorporating therein the nitric acid as a cleaning fluid and the hydrochloric acid as the inhibitor.

65. (New) A method according to claim 41, wherein component parts resulting from forging or from forging and subsequent machining are individually subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or to a nickel-removing treatment alone and the treated component parts are assembled into a finished product.

66. (New) A method according to claim 41, wherein a finished product formed of a plurality of parts resulting from forging or from forging and subsequent machining is subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment alone.

67. (New) A method according to claim 41, wherein the copper alloy that is subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment alone is brass or bronze.

68. (New) A method according to claim 41, wherein the plumbing device is a device that has a surface thereof subjected to a plating treatment using a nickel-containing metal.

69. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 54, comprising component parts forged, or forged and subsequently machined, individually subjected to both a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment, wherein the treated component parts are assembled into a finished product.

70. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 54, comprising a plurality of parts cast, or cast and subsequently machined, and subjected to both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment.

71. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 54, wherein the copper alloy treated by both of a deleading treatment and a nickel-removing treatment or a nickel-removing treatment is brass or bronze.

72. (New) A plumbing device according to claim 54, wherein the plumbing device has a surface thereof plated with a nickel-containing alloy.

73. (New) In a method for precluding elution of lead and nickel from a plumbing device made of a copper alloy that includes a valve and a tube coupling set forth in claim 41, the cleaning fluid for removing both lead and nickel or nickel alone comprising a mixed acid incorporating therein the nitric acid as a cleaning fluid and the hydrochloric acid as the inhibitor.